

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 172509

EXDIS FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT DAMASCUS 3888 ACTION SECSTATE INFO AMMAN,
BEIRUT, CAIRO, JERUSALEM, TEL AVIV, AND USUN DATED JULY 7, 1978.

QUOTE: S E C R E T DAMASCUS 3888

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: ZGDS-1,2

TAGS: PEPR, PINT, LE, SY

SUBJ: MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM ON LEBANON

REF: STATE 170394

SUMMARY: KHADDAM LISTENED CAREFULLY TO OUR
DEMARCH CALLING FOR URGENT CEASE FIRE IN EAST BEIRUT. HE
SAID SYRIA HAD ORDERED ITS ADF FORCES TO SHOW RESTRAINT AND
WITHIN LIMITS NOT TO RESPOND TO PROVOCATIONS. THESE ORDERS
WERE BEING OBEYED. UNILATERAL CEASFIRE WAS NOT NECESSARY.
MOST OF CHRISTIAN LEBANON SUPPORTED ADF ACTION AGAINST
PHALANGE AND CHAMOUN WHO WERE TRYING TO PARTITION LEBANON.

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SYRIA WAS ACTING IN SUPPORT OF SARKIS AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
AND WOULD STRIKE WITH EQUAL FORCE AGAINST PALESTINIANS IF
THEY MADE PROVOCATIVE MOVES. US SHOULD EXERCISE
PRESSURE ON CHAMOONS AND GEMAYELS. KHADDAM REACTED
NEGATIVELY TO IDEA OF SECURITY COUNCIL SESSION, URGING
US RECONSIDER SUCH A MOVE WHICH WOULD ONLY ENCOURAGE
SEPARATISTS. END SUMMARY

1. FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM RECEIVED ME AT 9:00 P.M.
THURSDAY, JULY 6 FOLLOWING HIS TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH PRC

PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION. OPENED BY SAYING WE WANTED TO WORK WITH SYRIANS IN ACHIEVING OUR COMMON OBJECTIVE AND TO AVOID MISUNDERSTANDING. AS HE WAS AWARE, WE HAVE SUPPORTED AND WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT SYRIA'S OBJECTIVES IN LEBANON AS WE UNDERSTAND THEM--PRESERVATION OF SECURITY, SUPPORT FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, FORESTALLING PARTITION, AND PREVENTING AN ESCALATION OF EVENTS IN LEBANON FROM LEADING TO WIDER WAR. SAID I WANTED TO EXPRESS THE SECRETARY'S PERSONAL CONCERN AT LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN LEBANON. DESCRIBED TO HIM AMBASSADOR PARKER'S MORNING MEETING WITH PRES. SARKIS AND SAID IT WAS OBVIOUSLY EVENTS OF PAST 24 HOURS WHICH HAD BROUGHT SARKIS TO HIS DECISION--INCLUDING THE MESSAGE FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS BROUGHT BACK FROM DAMASCUS, THE CONTINUED SYRIAN SHELLING OF EAST BEIRUT AFTER BOUTROS HAD RETURNED FROM SYRIA, AND THE GROWING SPECTRE OF ISRAELI INTERVENTION. IF SARKIS PERSISTED IN HIS INTENTION TO RESIGN SYRIA WOULD INEVITABLY BE BLAMED AND THIS WOULD NOT BE IN THE INTEREST OF SYRIA OR OF THE UNITED STATES OR OF LEBANON. PRES. SARKIS HAD NOT DESCRIBED TO US DETAILS OF BOUTROS' DISCUSSIONS IN DAMASCUS, NOR HAD HE REQUESTED THAT WE SPEAK TO SYRIA. WE WERE DOING SO OUT OF OUR CONCERN AT THE ESCALATING SITUATION IN LEBANON AND IN THE FRAMEWORK
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OF OUR SUPPORT FOR SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON AND OUR DIALOGUE WITH SYRIA ON THIS SUBJECT. WE BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT A CEASEFIRE IN BEIRUT BE ACHIEVED AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NEGOTIATING A MORE SATISFACTORY SITUATION. WE DO NOT BELIEVE FURTHER FIGHTING WOULD SERVE THE INTEREST OF ANYONE. WE OURSELVES HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE ISRAELIS REPEATEDLY TO URGE THEM TO USE THEIR INFLUENCE WITH CHRISTIAN MILITIA LEADERS AND THEY HAVE ASSURED US THEY HAVE DONE SO.

2. I THEN SKETCHED OUT OUR POSSIBLE SCENARIO FOR A UNILATERAL SYRIAN CEASEFIRE IN EAST BEIRUT LEADING TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH CHRISTIANS AND PALESTINIANS USING ALL THE POINTS CONTAINED IN STATE 170073.

3. KHADDAM REPLIED AT LENGTH, REPEATING MANY OF THE SAME POINTS HE MADE TO US JULY 1 (DAMASCUS 3769). HE AGREED US AND SYRIA SHARE MANY OBJECTIVES IN LEBANON INCLUDING SUPPORT FOR LEBANESE UNITY. DESIRE TO CONSOLIDATE LEGITIMACY OF THE STATE AND OPPOSITION TO PARTITION AND TO ALLOWING DOMINATION OF ARMED GROUPS. IN PURSUIT OF THESE OBJECTIVES SYRIA HAD SACRIFICED MORE THAN ANY OTHER STATE. SYRIA'S INTERVENTION HAD ACHIEVED POSITIVE RESULTS. IT HAD STOPPED THE FIGHTING AND TRIED TO ENHANCE THE LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY AND ASSIST IN REBUILDING STATE INSTITUTIONS, ESPECIALLY THE ARMY IN WHICH ALL FACTIONS WOULD BE NATIONALLY REPRESENTED.

4. KHADDAM THEN DELIVERED LENGTHY EXPOSITION OF DESIGNS OF THE PHALANGE AND CHAMOUNISTS WHICH HE SAID AIMED AT PARTITION AND A WEAKENING OF THE STATE AS A PRELUDE TO TAKING IT OVER. THESE ARMED GROUPS WERE IMPOSING TAXES INSTEAD OF THE STATE, PILFERING HOMES, KIDNAPPING AND KILLING PEACEFUL CIVILIANS WITHOUT ANY CHECK. SYRIA HAD URGED SARKIS TO RECOGNIZE THIS THREAT AND CONFRONT IT BE EXERCISING HIS RESPONSIBILITY AS PRESEDENT OF LEBANON.

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SYRIA HAD URGED HIM TO MAKE USE OF THE ADF, A LIGITIMATE FORCE MADE UP OF SYRIANS AND OTHER ARAB STATES, AND PUT AT HIS DISPOSITION TO HELP REESTABLISH ORDER AND EXTEND THE GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY THROUGHOUT LEBANESE TERRITIORY. SYRIA'S ACTION SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK. HAD SYRIA BEEN ACTING OUTSIDE THIS FRAMEWORK IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY TO WITHDRAW FROM EAST BEIRUT BUT IN THAT CASE SYRIA WOULD NOT BEAR ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR INEVITABLE WIDESCALE CIVIL WAR WHICH WOULD RESULT AND WHICH NO ONE WOULD BE ABLE TO EXTINGUISH.

5. KHADDAM CONTINUED THAT THERE WAS NO PROBLEM TETWEEN SYRIAND THE CHRISTIANS. IT WAS ABSOLUTELY INCORRECT TO LABEL EAST BEIRUT INCIDENTS AS SYRIAN VS. CHRISTIAN. NINETY PERCENT OF THE CHRISTIANS NOW SUPPORT SYRIA, HE ASSERTED. WERE THE CHRISTIANS MEMBERS OF THE LEBANESE PARLIAMENT ASKED THEIR VIEWS IT WOULD BE FOUND THAT THE MAJORITY OF THEM OPPOSED THE PHALANGE AND THE LIBERALS. IN FACT, THE CHRISTIANS OF NORTH LEBANON, JEZZINE, THE BEKAA AND A MAJOR PART OF EL MATN ALL WERE OPPOSED TO CHAMOUN AND GENAYEL. CHRISTIAN LEADERS SUCH AS SULEIMAN FRANJIEH, RENE MOUAWAS, SAMAAN DWEIHI, JOSEPH SKAFF, QABALAN AISSA KHOURY, G. TOK, BOUTROS HARB, JEAN AZIZN FARID RAHHAL AND EMIL ABDO AL-NOUR, REPRESENT MAJOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES WHICH ARE CONVINCED THAT THE PHALANGE AND CHAMOUNISTS ARE WORKING AGAINST THE UNITY OF LEBANON. THESE TWO ARMED GROUPS, THE OUTLAW MUSCLE OF TWO POLITICAL PARTIES, ARE TRYING TO IMPOSE THEIR DOMINION OVER BOTH CRHISTIANS AND MUSLIMS AND THIS IS SOMETHING LEBANON WILL NOT ACCEPT.

6. KHADDAM SAID FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS HAD COME TO DAMASCUS TO ASK SYRIA FOR HELP. PRESEDENT ASSAD HAD ASKED

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HIM WHAT HE WISHED OF SYRIA. HE SAID, "WE DON'T KNOW." ASSAD HAD TOLD HIM SYRIA WAS READY TO HELP BUT IT MUST KNOW HOW AND WHERE SARKIS WANTED IT TO ACT. BOUTROS TOLD ASSAD THAT PRES. SARKIS WANTED TO RESIGN. ASSAD

REPLIED THAT RESIGNATION WOULD NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM. A HEAD OF STATE SHOULD RESIGN IF HIS RESIGNATION SOLVED THE PROBLEM BUT IN THIS CASE THE RESIGNATION OF SARKIS COULD ONLY BRING GREATER TRAGEDY TO LEBANON.

6. KHADDAM COMMENTED THAT PRES. SARKIS' MISTAKE WAS THAT HE TENDED TO LOOK TO ALL OF LEBANON THROUGH THE PRISM OF ONE QUARTER OF BEIRUT. EAST BEIRUT WAS NOT THE CHRISTIANS OF LEBANON, NOR WAS IT THE WHOLE OF LEBANON. ASSAD HAD TOLD BOUTROS THAT PRES. SARKIS SHOULD ACT AS PRES. OF ALL LEBANON AND THAT SYRIA WAS READY TO HELP HIM WITH WHATEVER HE NEEDED. BOUTROS SAID THAT PRES. SARKIS' PROBLEM WAS THE INTRANSIGENCE OF THE PHALANGE AND THE CHOMOUNISTS AND THEIR REFUSAL TO COOPERATE WITH HIM AND THEIR INSISTANCE OF WORKING FOR SEPARATIONIST GOALS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ISRAELIS. SARKIS FELT HE HAD DONE ALL HE COULD WITH THEM BUT HAD MADE NO PROGRESS. IT WAS A CLOSED DOOR.

7. WITH REGARD TO A CEASE-FIRE, KHADDAM SAID THAT ASSAD HAD ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS TO THE SYRIAN FORCES IN THE ADF TO EXERCISE SELF-RESTRAINT AND TOLERATE PROVOCATIONS WITHIN SPECIFIED LIMITS IN HOPE THAT THIS WOULD HELP SARKIS IN HIS POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. AT 0015 JULY 6 A UNIT OF THE SYRIAN FORCES HAD BEEN SUBJECTED TO ARTILLERY SHELLING BUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS ORDER IT HAD NOT REACTED.

8. AS FOR NEGOTIATIONS, KHADDAM ADDED, THERE WERE AT PRESENT TWO ARMED PARTIES WHO WERE OUTLAWS AGAINST THE LEGITIMACY OF THE STATE. THE PROBLEM LAY BETWEEN THEM AND THE LEBANESE STATE. IN SYRIA'S VIEW ANY RETREAT ON
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CONCESSION TO THESE PARTIES WOULD NOT ENHANCE THE STABILITY OF LEBANON BECAUSE THEY WOULD EXPLOIT SUCH OPENINGS TO FURTHER THEIR PARTITIONIST DESIGNS. NO POLITICAL PARTY COULD TAKE THE PLACE OF THE STATE.

9. KHADDAM CALLED ON THE UNITED STATES TO EXERCISE PRESSURE ON THESE PARTIES TO CEASE THEIR CONFRONTATION WITH THE ADF AND END THEIR ARMED MANIFESTATIONS. US MUST MAKE THESE GROUPS' LEADERS UNDERSTAND THAT COURSE THEY ARE FOLLOWING IS A "BLOCKED ROAD."

10 AS FOR THEIR ALLEGED FEAR OF THE PALESTINIANS, THIS WAS NOT REALISTIC BECAUSE THE ADF WAS READY TO CONFRONT ANY PALESTINIAN MOVE WITH JUST AS MUCH STRENGTH AS IT HAD CONFRONTED THE PHALANGISTS AND CHAMOUNISTS. "WE GUARANTEE THIS" KHADDAM STATED AND RECALLED THAT IN PAST THE ADF HAD CONFRONTED MUSLIMS AND PALESTINIANS IN SUPPORT OF THE LEBANESE STATE. IT HAD ALSO PROTECTED THE

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES.

11. WHEN THINGS RETURN TO NORMAL, KAHADDAM SAID, THE LEBANESE STATE COULD PROCEED WITH SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS SECURITY PLAN FOR ALL OF LEBANON AND THE ADG WOULD COMPLY WITH WHATEVER INSTRUCTIONS SARKIS WISHED TO GIVE. THIS COULD OCCURE, KHADDAM REPEATED, AFTER THERE IS A RETURN TO NORMALCY IN EAST BEIRUT. WITHDRAWAL OF ADF FROM ITS BEIRUT POSITIONS NOW HOWEVER, WOULD MEAN RECOGNIZING THE PRINCIPLE OF PARTITION WHICH WOULD BE "A GRAVE MATTER."

12. SYRIA, KHADDAM ASSERTED IN CONCLUSION, REGRETTED EVERY DROP OF BLOOD SHED ON ALL SIDES IN LEBANON BUT IT WOULD NOT ALLOW ONE ARMED FRACTION TO DESTROY LEBANON.
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SYRIA HAS NOT CHANGED ITS POLICY TOWARDS LEBANON NOR WILL IT DO SO. IT IS ACTING TO SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE ENTIRE LEBANESE PEOPLE, THEIR UNITY, SOVEREIGNTY AND STABILITY.

13. I THANKED KHADDAM FOR HIS VERY DETAILED AND USEFUL PRESENTATION AND ASKED HIM WHAT WAS SYRIA'S LATEST INFORMATION ON ATTITUDE OF CHRISTIAN LEADERS, HE REPLIED THAT AS OF THAT MORNING THEY WERE CONTINUING IN THEIR INTRANSIGENCE. SYRIA HAD SUGGESTED TO BOUTROS THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS CALL IN THE CHRISTIAN LEADERS AND THREATEN THEM WITH HIS RESIGNATION. SYRIA UNDERSTOOD SARKIS HAD DONE THIS BUT DID NOT YET KNOW THE RESULTS.

14 ASKED KHADDAM TO AMPLIFY ON ORDERS WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN TO SYRIAN ADF FORCES. COULD WE SAY ON THE BASIS OF THESE ORDERS THAT ANOTHER UNBRIDLED ARTILLERY BARRAGE WAS UNLIKELY? KHADDAM REPLIED THIS DEPENDED ON WHETHER THERE WERE ATTACKS AND PROVOCATIONS AGAINST THE ADF. SYRIAN FORCES WOULD BE TOLERANT BUT IF THEY WERE ATTACKED OR SHELLED TO AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL THEN THEY WOULD RETURN FIRE TO SILENCE THE SOURCES OF FIRING AGAINST THEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR MISSION. I NOTED THAT A DISTINCTION MIGHT BE MADE BETWEEN ISOLATED SHOTS BY UNCONTROLLED INDIVIDUALS IN EAST BEIRUT AND ORGANIZED INTERNATIONAL PROVOCATIONS IN FORCE. THEN ASKED KHADDAM WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT OUR PROPOSAL OF A UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE. HE REPLIED THIS WAS NOT NECESSARY AND AGAIN REPEATED INSTRUCTIONS WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN TO SYRIAN FORCES.

15. ASKED KHADDAM WHETHER SYRIA WAS IMPOSING CONDITIONS ON CEASEFIRE AS MANY SOURCES IN BEIRUT WERE SAY. HE REPLIED, "ABSOLUTELY NOT." ASKED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT THE ALLEGED CONDITION THAT SYRIA WAS INSISTING ON CHRISTIAN MILITIAS BEING DISARMED. HE REPLIED THAT THE QUESTION

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OF CONDITIONS HAD NOT EVEN BEEN RAISED DURING BOUTROS' VISIT.

16. I THEN REITERATED TO KHADDAM SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH US VIEWED LATEST ESCALATIONS AND OUR INTENTION TO CALL FOR URGENT SECURITY COUNCIL SESSION. AT THIS POINT HIS MOOD CHANGED FROM SERIOUS AND COOPERATIVE TO COOL. RESORTING TO SECURITY COUNCIL, HE SNAPPED, WOULD HAVE NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS AND IT WOULD LEAD NOWHERE. SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION. SYRIA HOPED US WOULD RECONSIDER SUCH A MOVE SINCE IT WOULD MEAN THAT US AGREED WITH CONDUCT OF PHALANGE AND CHAMOUNISTS. SUCH A MOVE WOULD NOT BE MET WITH SATISFACTION BY SYRIA OR ANYONE IN THE ARAB WORLD. INTERNATIONALIZATION OF PROBLEM WOULD NOT SERVE OBJECTIVE OF STABILITY IN LEBANON.

17. I THANKED HIM FOR HIS REACTION AND IN CLOSING EXPRESSED OUR DEEP REGRETS FOR THE JULY 5 INCIDENT AT SYRIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AND DESCRIBED SECURITY MEASURES WHICH WE HAD TAKEN. I SAID WE LOOKED FORWARD TO STAYING IN TOUCH WITH SYRIA ON LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS AND THAT WORKING TOGETHER WE WOULD FIND WAY TO OVERCOME LATEST CRISIS AND ASSIST THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN MAINTAINING SECURITY AND EXERTING ITS AUTHORITY. HE NODDED AFFIRMATIVELY.

18. OUR SUBSEQUENT EXCHANGES THEN PROCEEDED IN THE MANNER DESCRIBED IN DAMASCUS 3866.

PELLETREAU
UNQUOTE VANCE

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